THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. During 1996-97, the total international passenger traffic handled in the country was 122,09,816, out of which Gujarat accounted for just 1,00,802 passengers (0.83%).

(c) and (d) Indian Airlines operates 7 weekly flights to Kuwait, Muscat & Sharjah from Ahmedabad at present. Airports Authority of India has also taken up upgradation/expansion of runway, apron & associated works at Ahmedabad airport to make it suitable for the operation of B-747 type of aircraft and tenders are likely to be invited by August, 1998.

Improvement in Designs of Ageing Aircrafts

601. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any project has been undertaken to improve the designs of the ageing aircraft to extend their life; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The Civil registered aircraft operated in India are maintained as per the guidelines issued by the DGCA. The manufacturers' requirements on ageing aircraft such as Corrosion Prevention and Control Programme (CPCP) and Supplementary Structural Inspection Programme (SSIP) are carried out by the operators in addition to structural modifications issued by the manufacturers from time to time to ensure structural integrity to maintain the old aircraft. This programme takes care of continued airworthiness of the aircraft throughout its service life.

Demand and Availability of Seats in Airlines

602. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH SURYA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) how many seats are in demands by the passengers in the country every day;

(b) what are the availability of such seats airlines-wise every day; and

(c) in case of gap in what way Government propose to fill it?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) to (c) The average number of passengers carried and the availability of seats per day are as follows:

	Availability	Passengers carried
Indian Airlines (including Alliance Air)	28,850	19,274
Jet Airways	16,400	11,600
Sahara India Airlines	3,266	1,536
Archna Airways	102	87

In the civil aviation field, supply creates the demand. Various steps are being taken to encourage the growth of the airlines so as to enhance the availability of air transport facilities in areas which are un-served or under-served presently.

Financial Performance of AI

603. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the financial performance of Air India was below par in the financial year 1996-97 and 1997-98;

(b) whether any in house survey of audit been done of the potential lapses of top management in this regard;

(c) if so, details of these findings;

(d) what were the causes of Air India's poor services and image during the financial year 1996-97 and 1997-98;

(e) whether responsibility being fixed on the personnel associated with this down-slide; and